

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following is a complete listing of the claims in this application, reflects all changes currently being made to the claims, and replaces all earlier versions and all earlier listings of the claims:

Claim 1. (currently amended): An image reading apparatus, connected to a plurality of image forming apparatuses via a network, ~~for transmitting an image signal representing an image that has been read to one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses;~~ said image reading apparatus comprising:

generation means for generating an image signal on the basis of reading the image;

selection means for selecting one ~~of~~ from the plurality of image forming apparatuses for receipt of the generated image signal;

input instruction reception means for receiving an input instruction of user management information from the selected image forming apparatus;

determination means for determining whether or not ~~the selected image forming apparatus requests input of~~ the input of the user management information relating to a user is necessary, in accordance with the received input instruction;

input control input means for controlling the input of inputting the user management information so as to be inputted in accordance with a the result of the determination by said determination means;

~~transmitting output~~ means for ~~transmitting~~ outputting the inputted user

management information to the selected image forming apparatus;

reception means for receiving, from the selected image forming apparatus, ~~a result of authenticating the transmitted management~~ availability information ~~for using from the selected image forming apparatus based on the output of the user management information~~; and

transmission control means for controlling transmission ~~such that~~ of the generated image signal is transmitted to the selected image forming apparatus, in accordance with the availability information ~~received result of the authentication of the transmitted management information from the selected image forming apparatus~~.

Claim 2. (currently amended): An image reading apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said transmission control means compresses the image signal prior to transmitting the image signal.

Claims 3 - 5. (canceled)

Claim 6. (currently amended): An image reading method for controlling an image reading apparatus, connected to a plurality of image forming apparatuses via a network, ~~transmitting an image signal representing an image that has been read to one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses~~; said image reading method comprising the steps of:

generating an image signal on the basis of reading the image;

selecting one ~~of~~ from the plurality of image forming apparatuses for

receipt of the generated image signal;

receiving an input instruction of user management information from the selected image forming apparatus;

determining whether or not ~~the selected image forming apparatus requests input of the input of the user management information relating to a user is necessary,~~  
in accordance with the received input instruction;

controlling the input of inputting the user management information so as to be inputted in accordance with a the result of the determination in said determining step;

transmitting outputting the inputted user management information to  
the selected image forming apparatus;

receiving from the selected image forming apparatus, a result of authenticating the transmitted management availability information for using from the selected image forming apparatus based on the output of the user management information;  
and

controlling transmission such that of the generated image signal is transmitted to the selected image forming apparatus, in accordance with the availability information ~~received result of the authentication of the transmitted management information from the selected image forming apparatus.~~

Claim 7. (previously presented): An image reading method according to Claim 6, wherein said control step includes compressing the image signal prior to transmitting the image signal.

Claims 8 - 14. (canceled)

Claim 15. (currently amended): A computer readable memory storing a program executing an image reading method for controlling an image reading apparatus, connected to a plurality of image forming apparatuses via a network, ~~transmitting an image signal representing an image that has been read to one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses~~, said program comprising:

code for generating an image signal on the basis of reading the image;

code for selecting one ~~of~~ from the plurality of image forming apparatuses for receipt of the generated image signal;

code for receiving an input instruction of user management information from the selected image forming apparatus;

code for determining whether or not ~~the selected image forming apparatus requests input of~~ the input of the user management information relating to a user is necessary, in accordance with the received input instruction;

code for controlling the input of ~~inputting~~ the user management information so as to be inputted in accordance with a the result of the determination by said determination code;

code for ~~transmitting~~ outputting the inputted user management information to the selected image forming apparatus;

code for receiving from the selected image apparatus, a result of authenticating the transmitted management availability information for using ~~from the~~

selected image forming apparatus based on the output of the user management information;  
and

code for controlling transmission such that of the generated image  
signal is transmitted to the selected image forming apparatus, in accordance with the  
availability information ~~received result of the authentication of the transmitted management~~  
~~information from the selected image forming apparatus.~~

Claim 16. (previously presented): A computer readable memory according  
to Claim 15, wherein said control code compresses the image signal prior to transmitting the  
image signal.

Claims 17 - 25. (canceled)

Claim 26. (previously presented): An apparatus according to Claim 1,  
wherein said selection means selects the image forming apparatus according to the generated  
image signal.

Claim 27. (previously presented): An apparatus according to Claim 1,  
wherein the management information includes at least a user ID, a division ID, or a title ID for  
the authentication determination at the selected image forming apparatus.

Claim 28 - 33. (canceled)